



Honourable J.V. Bainimarama, CF(Mil), OSt.J, MSD, jssc, psc

Prime Minister of Fiji and Minister for iTaukei Affairs and Sugar Industry

---

## **SPEECH AT THE RATU NAVULA COLLEGE CADET PASSING-OUT PARADE**

---

Ratu Navula College  
NADI

Wed. 22 April, 2015  
1200 Hours

---

**The Board of Governors of Ratu Navula College,  
The Principal and Members of the Staff,  
Members of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces,  
Parents and Friends of the School,  
Members of the College Cadet Corps,  
Boys and Girls,**

Bula vinaka and a very good afternoon to you all.

It fills me with tremendous pride to stand here today and look out over this wonderful scene - dozens and dozens of young Fijians lined up and looking so disciplined and splendid.

The manner in which you have just paraded before me does great credit to yourselves, to the Ratu Navula College and to our beloved nation. Because you have done so with excellence and an attention to detail that is the hallmark of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces and the national cadet programme in our schools throughout the country.

Your turnout, drill and bearing are of the highest standard and you can be proud of yourselves and your performance. You make a very impressive sight.

I'm inspired when I attend events like this because I know that the future of our beloved Fiji will be in good hands when my own generation passes into history and our young people assume responsibility for our nation's destiny.

Each of you is also part of a wonderful tradition in Fiji of service to our nation through our Cadet Corps and

the RFMF. That tradition is at the centre of our national life and has seen us keep the peace in troubled parts of the world through our service to United Nations peacekeeping.

For more than three decades, we have provided troops to the international community through the UN for its peacekeeping operations. As I've said before, these missions are the most noble any soldier can undertake - to try to prevent war. To put ourselves between the warring factions to keep the peace. To protect vulnerable ordinary people. To keep them safe.

These missions are fraught with danger. As we all know when 45 of our peacekeepers were detained in Syria last year. But the experience has done nothing to deter us from taking part in these missions. Because it is Fiji's gift to the world. To the people living in troubled places who are not as fortunate as ourselves.

I want you all to take a moment today to remember our brave men and women serving overseas in Lebanon, Sinai, Iraq and Sudan. There are currently more than one thousand of them overseas. Serving Fiji, serving the world.

We salute their commitment and their service and ask for God's continuing protection to bring them all home safely.

They provide us all with a wonderful example of patriotism – of a love of Fiji by being prepared to put their lives on the line in the cause of duty to our nation. But they also provide us with a wonderful example of Fijians making the world a better place and bringing great credit to our nation in the eyes of the international community.

Fiji stands tall and proud and has a reputation far beyond its size. And it is largely because of the commitment of these men and women and those like them over the years. And the commitment that I know some of you will continue if you decide to follow them into our armed forces.

While some of you may end up as soldiers or sailors, others will go into agriculture, commerce, the professions or take advantage of the opportunities my Government is providing to learn a trade and improve the skills base of our nation.

But whatever you choose to do, the lessons of discipline, patriotism, duty, honour, integrity, honesty and service that you have learned as cadets will stay with you all your lives. And you will take those lessons - those core values you have learned - and set an example to others.

You will also pass on these values to your own children when you have them. The unique pride of being Fijian. To be a citizen of one of the best and most beautiful countries in the world - one that we are working together as one people to make even greater.

As you know, we want to establish a genuinely Fijian identity with a new national symbol – a new flag to replace the one with colonial symbols – that we intend to hoist on Fiji Day, October 10, 2015.

As of today, there are just nine days to go before the national competition to design the new flag closes on May 1. So I urge you all to get your entries in and contribute your ideas to this noble endeavour to strengthen our identity and generate even more national pride.

We have an email address that you can send your entries to – *newfijiflag* (all one word) *@gmail.com*.

Or you can post your entries to the Department of Information, P.O Box 2225, Government Buildings, Suva. If you happen to be in the capital, you can also drop your entry in personally to the Information Department on the ground floor of New Government Buildings.

As I've said before, you don't need anything more than a piece of paper and a pen or pencil. And you never know: Your idea might just be the one that resonates with everyone or contributes to the final design. So get your entries in and be part of this historic occasion.

To all of you, I want to say: use these years to work as hard as you can at your studies, in the Cadet Corps and in the sporting arena to become the very best individuals you can be. But also never forget that you are part of Team Fiji.

Never forget that only by working together as one nation - each of us playing our part - can we achieve greatness. We can achieve our vision of a better and fairer nation for us all, no matter who we are or where we come from.

My Fellow Fijians,

The future of Fiji isn't one of a privileged few keeping only the best for themselves and not sharing with other ordinary, common Fijians. The future is of every Fijian joining hands to build a more prosperous future and holding out a helping hand to their fellow citizens who need it. Whether it is because they come from a disadvantaged background, live in a more isolated place than the rest of us, are sick, living with a disability or anything else that may be holding them back. Our task is to reach out and bring them forward with us. One nation. One Fiji. With opportunity and justice for all.



My Fellow Fijians,

I want to thank everyone involved with the College for working so hard to make this day a success - the Board of Governors, the Principal and Staff, our parents and, of course our students. And also those members of the RFMF who have helped get you to this impressive standard.

It is a great day for me personally as Prime Minister to see you all looking so wonderful.

It is a great day for the Ratu Navula College, which for 41 years has served the people of Nadi and the surrounding area and to which so many Fijians owe a great deal for what they have learned here.

And it is also a great day for Fiji as we witness once again the commitment and excellence of our young people and the high standards they display.

Looking around here today, I know that the future of our nation will be in good hands and that is something we can all celebrate.

May God continue to bless us all. May God bless Fiji.

Vinaka vakalevu, Thank you.

---